

FINAL

Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday March 27th 2007
Modesto Doctors Hospital Conference Room 4
Modesto CA

Board Members Present:

Jill Ames
Robert Balderama
Gary Del Nero
Mary Dye
John Lundberg
Brad Putz
Mollie Rogers
Deirdre Wright

Board Members Absent:

Fred Edmondson
Hanna Kassis
Anna Newman
Traci Trujillo

Staff Present:

Kathy Barnes-Executive Director
Neil Fromm-Community Program Specialist II

Facilitators:

David Simmerly
Paula Short-Lund
George Lewis

Guests:

Dick Jacobs-VMRC
Mark Herbst-Modesto City Schools
Robin Dickinson-VMRC

Call to order and introductions:

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 by Gary Del Nero the Chairperson. The Board, staff and audience introduced themselves. Mr. Del Nero announced that the approval of the agenda and minutes of the last meeting would be postponed until later in the interest of beginning the panel discussion on transition services in Stanislaus County.

Panel Discussion on Transitional Services in Stanislaus County:

Mark Herbst opened the discussion with a description of the transition plan as a document with specific goals and objectives designed to prepare students for life after education which would include preparation for the work force and other adult activities. He said the plan must be in place by the age of 16 for all individuals with an IEP and that the plan should direct the IEP. Mr. Herbst noted that educational planning ends for students who receive a diploma or reach the age of 22. He shared that parents should be active participants in the transition planning process and that the plan needs to be reviewed regularly and at least annually. The transition plan also must be modified as needed to accurately reflect the student's goals. Dick Jacobs shared that he believed transition should begin earlier than age 16 for most students and that it should include collaboration between the students, their parents, VMRC and education. Robert Balderama questioned how to approach transition when a student is unsure of his or her goals for life after high school. Robin Dickinson shared that in most cases, education exposes the student to work options either through classroom activities or using the Workability program and that discussion needs to be taking place with the student to ascertain his or her desires dreams and goals. John Lundberg stated that in his reading of the Stanislaus County Overview included in the Board packet, he noted the statement that there is no mechanism for coordination of transitional services in Stanislaus County. Mr. Jacobs described the transitional task force in San Joaquin County as a means of cooperation in coordinating transitional

services and noted that VMRC and the Area Board 6 are involved in developing a similar means of coordination of services in Stanislaus County. Mr. Lundberg asked about similar efforts in the mountain counties with Ms. Barnes responding that the mountain counties have limited numbers of students and limited numbers of resources and that many aspects of planning are based on informal relationships of the participants. Ms. Barnes noted that the Department of Rehabilitation has an interest in participating in a collaborative process to improve transitional services. She asks about the Regional Center's role in transitional planning and Mrs. Dickerson shared that the Regional Center is involved through its case management functions and their role as advocates in the IEP process. She expressed concern that some parents choose not to involve the Regional Center in the educational program planning process and even may inactivate their children from services only to find that the services need to be in place when the child reached transitional age.

The conversation shifted to the Workability Program and employment with Mr. Jacobs noting that he feels Workability to have a major role in preparing a student for employment. He also shared that the tradition of day program participation, particularly as a social outlet, is a significant barrier to employment. Mr. Herbst noted he would favor expanding employment opportunities, that Workability is currently not available in Stanislaus County public schools and that Modesto City Schools is on the waiting list to initiate the program. Ms. Barnes asked what services were available to the student wishing to develop employment opportunities and options. Mr. Herbst described that work experience is available in all high schools and that ROP programs and community based instruction may also be part of a special education student's transitional plans. Mr. Balderama inquired as to what educational opportunities leading to employment were available to someone who is a mature adult and Mrs. Dickinson replied that ROP programs, Community College participation and the Department of Rehabilitation were some opportunities that could be discussed with an individual's service coordinator.

An audience member shared that she was unsure of the process involved in notification of people who should be present at the transitional planning meeting. Mrs. Dickerson and Mr. Herbst noted that the parent or student has the responsibility of inviting the IEP participants outside of those required by law. Ms. Barnes spoke of Family Resource Network working to develop a checklist of who should attend and what should be part of the transitional planning process.

Mr. Balderama expressed that there is a need for education to address the common misconception of students losing public benefits if they are employed. Mr. Jacobs described the website www.db101.org as a means of finding out more about benefits in relation to employment and Mrs. Dickinson noted that DRAIL is an outstanding resource providing information on SSI and other benefits. Mr. Herbst expressed that this would be an excellent topic to include in any collaborative discussion in regard to the transitional process.

Some other barriers to employment in Stanislaus County were noted by Ms. Barnes including that in many instances the student lacks a circle of support, the shallow pool of supported employment vendors and the lack of Workability programs. Mrs. Dickinson pointed out that sometimes employers are reluctant to hire the disabled fearing significant costs associated with ADA compliance for required accommodations. Ms. Barnes described optimism with a Department of Rehabilitation decision to support an individual with a vending machine business.

Before the panel discussion ended at 8:13, Mr. Del Nero and Mr. Herbst expressed interest in participating in the process of developing a collaboration of agencies and individuals committed to improving the transitional planning process in Stanislaus County.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

Motion to approve agenda. Lundberg/Putz (passed)

Motion to approve minutes. Lundberg/Putz (passed)

Public Comment:

None

SB1270:

Ms. Barnes noted that public comment meetings on SB1270 were held in San Andreas, Modesto and Lodi and that this information had been forwarded to the State Council with a final date to provide comment of tomorrow the 28th of March. A stake holders meeting is scheduled to occur in April at Alta Regional Center with a May 1st report with recommendations to the governor. Ms. Barnes noted that SB1270 addresses how funds are to be directed for services. She pointed out that recommendations that income streams from various agencies be combined to facilitate collaboration and that community colleges may be involved in providing more services were suggested.

Stanislaus County Overview:

Ms. Barnes shared that Stanislaus County has the highest percentage of individuals with developmental disabilities living with there family of origin. She also noted that while time lines for Early Start are being met better in Stanislaus County than in San Joaquin County, assessment is occurring in a clinical environment rather that a natural environment as required by law.

Mini Grants:

Mr. Putz shared that at his attendance during the last State Council meeting it was agreed that mini grant funds available to the Area Board 6 would be increased from \$5,000 this year to \$10,000 for the next fiscal year. It was also noted that sponsorships for attendees to meetings and conferences was to be part of the uses of the grant funds. Ms Barnes noted that the grant funds may be used for different areas of emphasis with the Board's ad hoc committee's recommendation that it be used to promote advocacy services. Mr. Balderama asked if the monies could be split up into smaller grant amounts and the consensus was that this is a possibility. Mr. Lundberg noted that a decision on the expenditures needs to be made by September 1st and Ms. Barnes agreed that the monies must be encumbered by September 30th. She asked that the Board consider its approval of the use of the draft application/proposal, the time line for development and the emphasis on advocacy services. Deirdre Wright asked for specific examples of advocacy related services and Ms. Barnes provided several examples to the Board.

Mr. Lundberg moved that the Board approve the draft application/proposal letter, the time line and the emphasis on advocacy. Mr. Balderama seconded. (passed)

Board Member Reports:

State Council Update: Mr. Putz described his most recent participation at the State Council Meeting in San Diego. He noted San Diego experiences problems with disabled people riding municipal busses and that Berkley had been designated the most user friendly city in the nation for the disable population. He passed around to the Board an e-letter and a power point presentation he received at the meeting.

VMRC Consumer Services Committee: No report

VMRC Resource Development Committee: No report

Calaveras County Transportation: Mr. Lundberg shared that through Area Board advocacy and the efforts of the developmentally disabled community, all transportation issues affecting the disabled population in Calaveras County were addressed to his satisfaction. He said he felt Calaveras County was making an effort to improve the system and to be more flexible in regard to route deviations.

Exceptional Parent Position Statement: This item was briefly discussed with Ms. Barnes suggesting and the Board approving that it be a topic for further discussion at the next Board meeting. The Board will also consider support of the positions advocated by the Exceptional Parent Position Statement at that meeting.

Other Member Activities: Mr. Del Nero shared he had a fun and interesting time at a Special Olympics event in the Sacramento area and Ms. Barnes noted that the Board would consider providing scholarships to members for the upcoming CHOICES conference.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:44.